

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 are amended. Support for the amendments can be found in paragraph [26] of the specification, as amended on July 6, 2006, and figure 4. Upon entry of this Amendment, claims 1-9 are pending. Claims 1-9 stand rejected.

I. Amendments to the Specification

The specification has been amended to correct for an error in the description of Figure 1. Figure 1 illustrates the airbag in an un-deployed condition. Support for this amendment can be found in specification, as amended on July 6, 2006, in paragraphs [0025] and [0026] and figures 3 and 4.

II. Amendments to Claims**Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Ogata in view of Ikeda**

Claims 1-3 and 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,866,293 to Ogata et al. (Ogata) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,811,184 to Ikeda et al. (Ikeda). The Examiner argues that it would have been obvious to modify the invention of Ogata to have the gas guide member come into contact with the convex seam as described in Ikeda to stabilize the outflow direction of the inflating gas into the airbag. Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner.

With respect to claim 1, The Examiner appears to have equated the inner tube (33) of Ogata with the gas guide member of the present invention and the section joint portion (29) with the convex seam of the present invention. The section joint portions (29) of Ogata are arranged to define the front and rear seat inlet portions into a plurality of vertical expansion portions to substantially equalize the thickness. (col 7, lines 3-6).

As the Examiner points out, Ogata does not disclose the gas guide coming into contact with a convex seam.

The Examiner states that Ikeda teaches a gas guide member (35) that "comes into contact with the convex seam". (page 3, line 1 of the office action). The Examiner cites Figs. 3, 6, 12 and col. 12, lines 38-48. Applicants submit that Ikeda does not disclose a convex seam in the context of a support. At col. 12, lines 38-45, Ikeda discloses that "the horizontal joint portions **31** are lined up in the longitudinal direction near the lower edges of the first and second gas outlet . . . the lower edge sides of the first and second gas outlet holes **39** and **40** can be supported by the horizontal joint portions **31**." Ikeda does not describe a convex seam that supports the gas outlet holes.

However, in an effort to advance prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 1 to require that a top part of the convex seam is disposed in opposition to and facing the guide member and that the gas guide member comes into contact with at least the top part of the convex seam. Because neither Ogata or Ikeda alone or in combination describe an airbag comprising a guide member that comes into contact with at least the top part of a convex seam the claims of the pending application are not obvious over Ogata in view of Ikeda.

Even assuming for arguments sake that Ikeda does teach a convex seam according to the invention, Applicants submit that there would have been no motivation for one of skill in the art to modify the relationship of the inner tube and section joint portions of Ogata such that the two come into contact with each other. Ogata does not contemplate that the section joint portions (29) function to support for the inner tube (33) nor is there any disclosure in Ogata that would suggest modifying the section joint

portion to provide support or stabilization for the inner tube was desirable. Ogata does not refer to any problem with the stability of the inner tube. The Examiner has provided no specific description of why one of skill in the art would choose to modify the section joint portions of Ogata (which are arranged to define the front and rear seat inlet portions into a plurality of vertical expansion portions to substantially equalize the thickness to become a support) to be a structure for stabilizing the outflow direction of the inflating gas.

With respect to depended claims 2-9, the same reasons above apply to the dependent claims of claim 1 and therefore dependent 2-9 are not obvious over Ogata in view of Ikeda.

With respect to claim 2, in addition to the reasons above, claim 2 is not obvious for at least the following reason. The Examiner states that Ikeda teaches that "the gas discharge tube (38) comes into contact with the convex seam in response to the inflation of the airbag so as to change the direction of gas flow. (Figs. 3, 6 and 12, col 12, lines 48-58.)" (page 3, last 4 lines of the office action). Applicants submit that there would have been no motivation for one of skill in the art to modify the relationship of the inner tube and section joint portions of Ogata such that the two come into contact with each other to change the direction of gas flow. Contrary to the Examiner's statement that Ikeda teaches changing the direction of gas flow, Ikeda teaches that that "it is possible to stabilize the outflow direction of the inflating gas." Col. 12, line 53. And that "[a]s a result, it is possible to suppress downward motion of the current regulating cloth **35** near the first and second gas outlet holes **39** and **40** when the inflating gas G flows out." (column 12, lines 49-51) Thus, Ikeda cannot make up for the deficiency of Ogata regarding the lack of teaching changing the direction of gas flow because it does not

describe an airbag comprising a guide member that comes into contact with at least the top part of a convex seam so as to change the direction of gas flow.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103 over Ogata in view of Ikeda and Tanaka

Claims 4-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ogata in view of Ikeda, as applied to claims 1-3 and 6-9 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,971,665 to Tanaka (Tanaka).

As described in detail above, none of the claims as currently pending are obvious over Ogata in view of Ikeda. Tanaka does not make up for the deficiencies of those two references. The Examiner's modified figure 6 of Tanaka, does not disclose a convex seam which "when the airbag is being inflated, causes the gas guide member to come into contact with at least the top part of the convex seam" as is required by claims 4 and 5 by virtue of their dependence from claim 1. The seams of Tanaka serve to separate chambers or cells of the airbag, not to contact with a gas guide member. It does not even appear from figure 6 that there is a structure which corresponds to a gas guide member that could come into contact with a convex seam. Tanaka describes 60a in figure 6 simply as an "opening", see col. 1, line 54. The Examiner does not explain why one of skill in the art would be motivated by Tanaka to modify the section joint portions in Ogata to a triangular shape and to come in contact with the inner tube. Ogata does not contemplate that the section joint portions function to support for the inner tube (33) nor is there any disclosure in Ogata that would suggest modifying the section joint portion to provide support or stabilization for the inner tube was desirable. Ogata does not refer to any problem with the stability of the inner tube.

With respect to claim 5 the Examiner simply states "that it would have been obvious to modify the invention of Ogata to have the gas guide member come into contact with the convex seam and straddle the two inclined sides as described in Ikeda

et al. to stabilize the outflow direction of the inflating gas." As discussed above, the Examiner does not explain why one of skill in the art would be motivated to modify the section joint portions in Ogata, which function to separate plurality of vertical expansion portions, to be a structure that would come into contact with the top of the convex seam much less to modify the shape of the inner tube to straddle two inclined sides of any portion of a convex seam.

Because none of Ogata, Ikeda or Tanaka alone or in combination describe an airbag comprising a guide member that comes into contact with at least the top part of a convex seam, the claims of the pending application are not obvious over Ogata in view of Ikeda and Tanaka. For reasons discussed in detail above, Applicants submit that there is nothing in Ikeda or Tanaka that would motivate one of skill in the art to modify Ogata to arrive at an airbag as currently claimed.

For all these reasons, favorable reconsideration of independent claim 1 and the dependent claims 2-9, is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, the Applicants respectfully submit that the specification is in order and that all of the claims are now in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that personal contact would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner contact the Attorney of the Applicants at the earliest convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated:

April 16, 2009

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